Dr. A. G. Menon.—Sir, why was not quinine supplied to Nannyode for the past 10 months? I find only Kuriarkutti—8 lbs. and Nannyode—nil, till now, 1102.

Diwan Bahadur Dr. V. Verghese.—Nannyode had on the 1st Chingam 1102, 9 lbs. and 1 oz. of quinine and 8 lbs. 8 ozs. of cinchona, and further, after I have sent in the answer, 15 lbs. of quinine. But they had 9 lbs. of quinine, and, by the time I sent it, they had 4 oz. still left. And here is the report saying that there is sufficient cinchona and quinine for the dispensary.

Dr. A. G. Menon.—The report, as you say, says "quinine and cinchona". Quinine and cinchona are different medicines. My question was about quinine.

Diwan Bahadur Dr. V. Verghese.—I said " quinine 9— lbs. ", there was also cinchona.

President.—How much of quinine were there?

Diwan Bahadur Dr. V. Verghese.—9 lbs. and 1 oz.

President.—For what period would it last?

Diwan Bahadur Dr. V. Verghese.—Approximately half a pound per month.

President.—So for 18 months; more than the requirements.

Diwan Bahadur Dr. V. Verghese.—He wrote to me that he has 4 oz. of quinine left.

President.—Was there any deficiency in the whole supply?

Diwan Bahadur Dr. V. Verghese.—4 oz. he has got now.

Visitors' books.

137. Dr. A. G. Menon.—Will the Government be pleased to state:—

(a) the object for which 'Visitors' books' are maintained in public institutions under the Government;

(b) whether the visitors are restrained from expressing their opinions freely;

(c) whether the Heads of Departments have the power to delete or order their subordinates to delete any remarks that are not agreeable to them;

(d) if so, whether the Government have authorised them to do so;

(e) if so, when and how?

Diwan Bahadur Dr. V. Verghese.—(a) Visitors' Books are maintained in public institutions to record the visits and also any remarks that any visitor may be competent to make.

(b) Vide answer to (a).

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(c) No; not on the ground that the remarks are not agreeable, but for other sufficient reasons subject to the general control of the Government.

(d) & (e). Vide Answer to (c).

Dr. A. G. Menon.—The answer to (a) is "Visitors' books are maintained in public institutions to record the visits and also any remarks that any visitor may be competent to make." I cannot understand the meaning of the word "competent." What is the competency may be explained?

Diwan Bahadur Dr. V. Verghese.—It is a common English word.

Dr. A. G. Menon.—That I agree.

Diwan Bahadur Dr. V. Verghese.—Each man must know his own competency. If the Hon'ble Member for Engineering, comes into the Hospital and says anything about the construction of the building, I say he is competent to say that. If the Law Member comes and says that the roofing is not alright, I say he is incompetent to do it. I shall give many instances.

Dr. A. G. Menon.—Am I to understand, Sir, that he comes and says there is a big crack to the building, and he is able to know, even if he is not an Engineer? Is he not competent?

President.—He will be. But, you see, it is a relative term.

Dr. A. G. Menon.—These general remarks?

President.—We cannot say in clear terms as to the comtency of a particular person.

Dr. A. G. Menon.—So the competency means only medical men are to make medical remarks about the working of a medical institution. Am I to take it in that light, Sir?

President.—Not exactly. The Doctor himself says that it is a kind of general remark which could not be more definitely defined, and I think he won't be able.

Dr. A. G. Menon.—It is in the Government answer, "competent to make". If you will only give the definition, then only, I will be able to put further questions.

President.—What is the definition of the word "competency"?

Dr. A. G. Menon.—The Hon'ble Member for Medicine says that only persons, who have knowledge of engineering, should make remarks about the buildings and all that. So a technical man alone should exercise the right of passing remarks.

Diwan Bahadur Dr. V. Verghese.—No, no, no. I never said that. I gave only an illustration.

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Dr. A. G. Menon.—Without illustrations, of course.

Diwan Bahadur Dr. V. Verghese.—It does not mean that technical men could make and pass any remarks; not at all.

Dr. A. G. Menon.—The word "competency" may be clearly defined.

President.—Probably it will give us the same difficulty as in defining the "Government of Cochin."

Dr. A. G. Menon.—Of course, Sir, we ask this question for some definite purpose, and if these words are put in there, it practically closes our right to ask further questions. Everything will come under the word "competency". Defining the words "Government of Cochin" is quite different. We have to centre all further questions on this answer.

President.—On the words "Government of Cochin" so many questions were put.

Dr. A. G. Menon.—This is not such a case.

President.—What do you want?

Dr. A. G. Menon.—The definition or meaning of the word "competent" may be given.

Diwan Bahadur Dr. V. Verhgese.—I do not think it is possible to define "competency". It is clear as daylight, as far as I can see.

Dr. A. G. Menon.—If he is not in a position to define the word "competent", then, I beg to ask, what is the use of giving us an answer without being able to define the word "competent", though "it is a common English word". Sir, am I to understand that the word was used without understanding the meaning?

President.—That is a comment on the answer.

Dr. A. G. Menon.—I do not want to make any comment. What I want is I want to know the exact meaning of the word "competent."

President.—The question is put and answered. We are not in a position to do more than that.

Dr. A. G. Menon.—With regard to sub-division (c), may I know whether the Heads of Departments have the power to delete or order their subordinates to delete certain remarks that are not agreeable to them?

Diwan Bahadur Dr. V. Verghese.—The answer given is "No; not on the ground that the remarks are not agreeable, but for other sufficient reasons subject to the general control of the Government."

Dr. A. G. Menon.—May I know what are "the general control of the Government" and "sufficient reasons"? What are the sufficient reasons, specially in this respect?

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Diwan Bahadur Dr. V. Verghese.—Which respect?

Dr. A. G. Menon.—To delete any remarks. A visitor need not be a member.

Diwan Bahadur Dr. V. Verghese.—If they give me a concrete example, I would be able to say what it is; but I cannot give a comprehensive answer for a general question which will answer for all cases of observations. The words "sufficient reasons" will refer to each case.

Dr. A. G. Menon.—My question is a general question. I never confine it to the Medical Department; what I have asked is "whe her the Heads of Departments have the power to delete or order their subordinates to delete any remarks that are not agreeable to them".

Diwan Bahadur Dr. V. Verghese.—The answer is for "sufficient reasons". It is a general answer to a general question.

Dr A. G. Menon.—What are the sufficient reasons? May I know one or two reasons at least, competent reasons?

Diwan Bahadur Dr. V. Verghese.—The first reason is "incompetency".

Dr. A. G. Menon.—There again comes the word "incompetency". That is the difficulty. The word "competency" comes forward, and unless we know the exact meaning, we cannot proceed further and ask some more questions. First of all, I want to know whether the incompetency applied to the person or to the remarks.

Diwan Bahadur Dr. V. Verghese.—Incompetency does not refer to the person but to the remarks.

Dr. A. G. Menon.—I did not say that, nor did I mean that. Who are competent to make remarks—that is the difficulty, Sir. Who are competent, and who are not competent to make remarks? The word "incompetency" may be clearly and properly explained, Sir, and also the words "subject to the general control".

President.—Are you in a position to say what reasons are sufficient, Dr. Verghese?

Dr. A. G. Menon.—Not only in the Medical Department, but generally.

Diwan Bahadur Dr. V. Verghese.—I am always answering in a general way. Supposing a layman comes into the Hospital, and says that quinine was not and ought not to have been given, and that it should be some other medicine, say Ayurvedic medicine, he is incompetent. This is an illustration of incompetency—for a laymanto come and say that. So also, if I go there into the Hospital, and say that the buildings are all right, apparently makes no difference. All that is incompetency. He

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must be a person who is competent to make that remark. These are the illustrations that I can give.

Dr. A. G. Menon.—Are we to understand, Sir, that those who are not specialists in certain subjects are not allowed to make any common remarks, on other subjects than his own special subject?

Diwan Bahadur Dr. V. Verghese.—Oh, yes—whether they are able to maintain them or not. For a layman he cannot. If he does, that is a clear case of incompetency.

Dr. A. G. Menon.—I am a layman, as far as educational matters are concerned. Am I competent to make any remark on that subject?

Diwan Bahadur Dr. V. Verghese.—Not "any remarks" I said.

President.—These are almost hypothetical cases.

Dr. A. G. Menon.—The word "competent" in the reply is so moulded, at least clouded over the whole question.

Diwan Bahadur Dr. V. Verghese.—It is a clear answer.

Remarks in the Visitors' book of the Kuriarkutti Dispensary.

138. Dr. A. G. Menon.—Will the Government be pleased to state whether the Chief Medical and Sanitary Officer ordered his subordinate at Kuriarkutti to expunge the remarks made in the Visitors' book by Dr. A. R. Menon;

(1) if so, was it done with the knowledge of the Government;

(2) has the matter come to the notice of the Government;

(3) if so what action the Government has taken or proposes to take in the matter?

Diwan Bahadur Dr. V. Verghese.—Yes.

(1) No.

(2) Yes.

(3) The matter was considered and recorded.

Dr. A. G. Menon.—I think Dr. A. G. Menon is competent to make a remark in the Visitors' book.

Diwan Bahadur Dr. V. Verghese.—You said Dr. A. G. Menon.

Dr. A. G. Menon.—I meant Dr. A. R. Menon. Take my case also. I think I am competent.

The answer given to part (3) is "the matter was considered and recorded." Am I to understand that the Government fully endorsed the action of the Chief Medical Officer in respect of the order to his subordinate to expunge the remarks? Am I to understand that the matter was considered and recorded?

Diwan Bahadur Dr. V. Verghese.—Should I answer?

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